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MEMORANDUM FOR: RECORD

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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

## MEMORANDUM

### *The Situation in Vietnam*

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112

29 January 1967

25X1

Approved For Release 2007/04/02 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001600010029-7

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Information as of 1600  
29 January 1967

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### HIGHLIGHTS

The South Vietnamese Constituent Assembly has completed work on the constitution's second chapter dealing with the rights and duties of citizens. The assembly voted for the provisions requiring military personnel elected to office to be demobilized and prohibiting military participation in political party activity.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:  
US forces are participating in 11 of 34 battalion-size or larger operations under way over the weekend (Paras. 1-5). The VC attacked three Popular Force outposts south of Saigon over the weekend (Paras. 6-7). Several sharp fights have been reported in Operation DESOTO, begun on 26 January in Quang Ngai Province (Paras. 8-9). The 28 January B-52 incendiary strike was one of three planned to test such techniques for destroying large areas of forest or jungle (Para. 10). There was a rash of incidents in recent days which caused civilian casualties (Paras. 11-14). The 18th NVA Regiment may have serious morale problems (Para. 15).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:  
The Constituent Assembly has completed its work on the second chapter of the constitution, and soon will begin to debate important provisions dealing with the legislative branch of the future government (Paras. 1-3). Meanwhile, relations between the assembly and government leaders have hit a temporary snag (Para. 4).

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Normally quiet montagnard villagers in northern Kontum Province are becoming more dissatisfied with the government.

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments: Seven, possibly 12 Fishbed MIG-21 aircraft crates were noted at Phuc Yen Airfield in photography

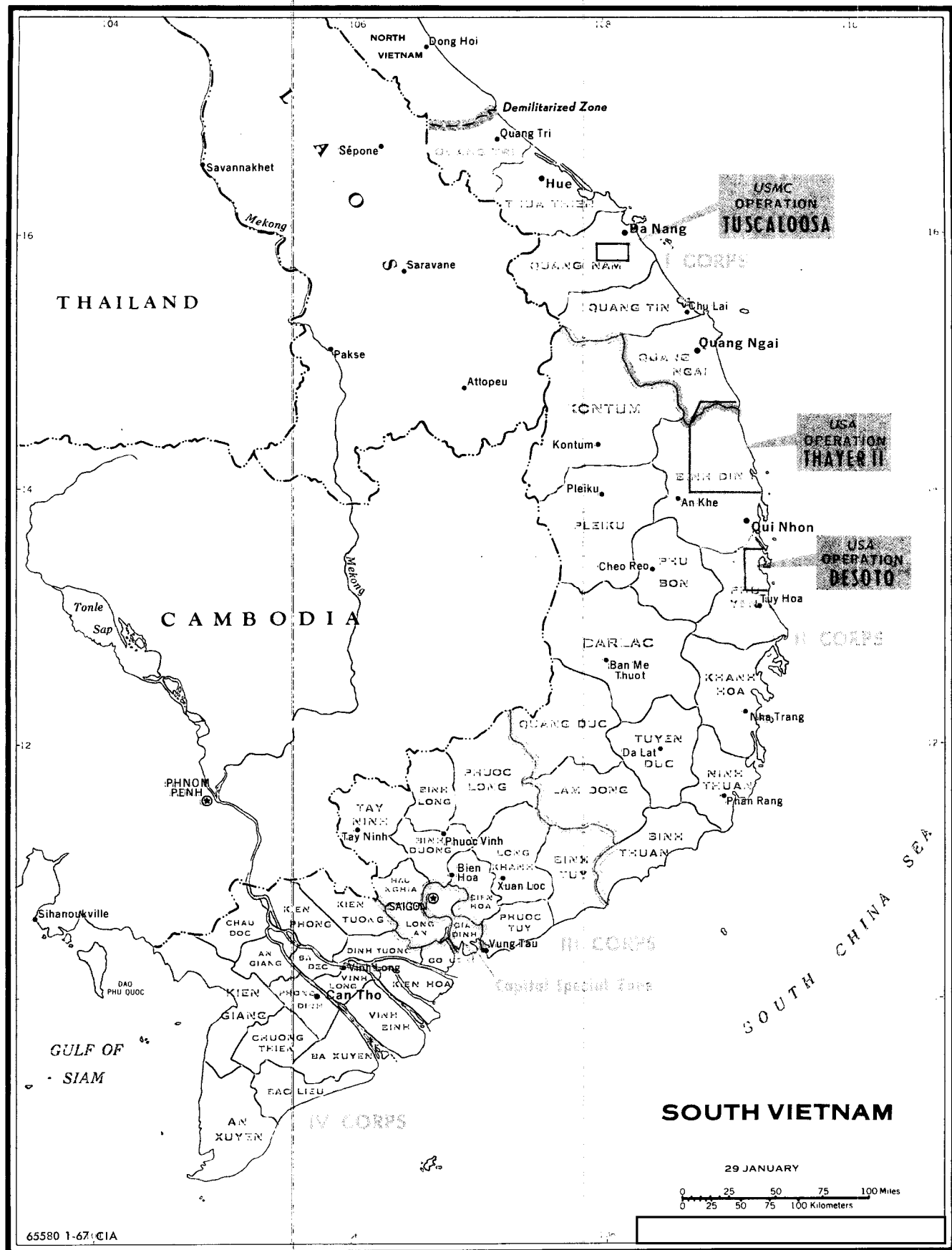
V. Communist Political Developments: Public and private remarks made by DRV officials concerning Hanoi's reaction to a cessation of the bombing are reported (Paras. 1-3). Remarks by DRV officials in France on the situation in China and the Liberation Front are reported (Paras. 4-6).

ANNEX:

South Vietnam Battle Statistics

1963 through the week of 15-21 Jan 67

- Weapons and Personnel Losses
- Viet Cong Attacks and Incidents



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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. US forces were participating in 11 of the 34 battalion-size or larger operations that were under way over the weekend. South Vietnamese forces were participating in 22 and South Korean forces in one of these operations. There was little significant activity during this period although several small, but sharp, encounters in various parts of the country were reported.

2. On 27 January, a US Marine patrol directed artillery fire and air strikes on two groups of enemy soldiers about 25 miles west-northwest of Hue. Some 31 enemy were reported killed, with no friendly casualties.

3. In Operation THAYER II, a battalion of the US 1st Air Cavalry Division engaged an enemy force for six hours on 27 January about 47 miles south-southeast of Quang Ngai. The US battalion was reinforced by two South Vietnamese Marine battalions during the engagement. Enemy losses were 21 killed and 18 persons detained while US forces lost two killed and 22 wounded.

4. Elsewhere in Operation THAYER II, two US Army companies engaged an estimated enemy company about 50 miles north of Qui Nhon on 28 January. Artillery, tactical air strikes and armed helicopters were employed against the enemy in the two-hour engagement. Friendly casualties were one killed and seven wounded while the enemy sustained 16 killed.

5. Northwest of Quang Ngai city on 27 January, South Korean Marines and an unknown number of VC/NVA troops engaged in a fire fight. Results were three Koreans killed and 14 wounded as against 28 enemy soldiers killed.

VC Attacks

6. Two South Vietnamese Popular Force outposts 40 miles southwest of Saigon were attacked by an enemy platoon on 28 January. A two-company reaction force, supported by tactical air strikes, armed helicopters and artillery, was committed and established contact with the Viet Cong force, resulting in 35 enemy killed and five persons detained. Friendly casualties were 9 killed, 12 wounded, and two missing.

I-1

29 January 1967

7. Another Popular Force outpost 48 miles southwest of Saigon was attacked by an estimated enemy company on the same day. The attack cost the enemy 24 killed while friendly casualties were two killed and 14 wounded, including seven civilians.

#### Operations Terminated or Begun

8. Operation TUSCALOOSA, a four-day tactical area of responsibility operation 14 miles south-southwest of Da Nang, ended on 28 January. Cumulative casualties in this one-battalion operation were 17 marines killed and 52 wounded as against enemy casualties of 79 killed--most of them in an engagement on 26 January--and two persons detained.

9. Operation DESOTO, another one-battalion marine search-and-destroy operation, began on 26 January in an area approximately 28 miles south-southeast of Quang Ngai. Enemy forces believed to be in the area include the 1st and 2nd VC regiments, the 409th Sapper Battalion, and the 38th and 48th VC battalions. Total estimated enemy strength is 4,750 men. About 12 hours after DESOTO began, a company of marines engaged in a fire fight with an enemy force of unknown size resulting in four US killed and nine wounded. Nine enemy soldiers were killed. On 28 January, another marine company received heavy small-arms and automatic-weapons fire in an area some 25 miles south-southeast of Quang Ngai. Two marines were killed and eight wounded in this engagement while enemy casualties are unknown.

#### B-52 Strike

10. The incendiary strike by thirty B-52s on 28 January some 55 miles north-northwest of Saigon was the second of three such strikes. It was intended to determine the techniques and conditions required to destroy large areas of forest or jungle growth by fire and deny their use to the enemy. Ground follow-up to this strike is planned by Special Forces teams.

#### Incidents Causing Civilian Casualties

11. There was a rash of incidents over the weekend which caused civilian casualties. The worst of these



took place in a Mekong Delta village in Phong Dinh Province on 28 January. The incident occurred when a US "FIREFLY" operation, using three armed/search-light helicopters against enemy water traffic, drew hostile fire. The fire was returned and resulted in killing 31 civilians and wounding 38 others. River patrol boats in the area assisted in evacuating the wounded to the hospital at Can Tho.

12. In Hau Nghia Province, some ten kilometers southwest of Cu Chi, one Vietnamese civilian was killed and four were wounded when a friendly artillery round fell short.

13. On 28 January, four civilians were killed and one wounded in an apparent shooting in Bien Hoa city, 15 miles northeast of Saigon. Two US Army enlisted men are being held for investigation in this incident.

14. In Gia Dinh Province, a US Government vehicle crashed into a Vietnamese civilian home killing a pregnant woman and injuring four other civilians.

#### Morale Problem in the 18th NVA Regiment

15. A report rated as possibly true by MACV states that a flash letter dated 10 January was sent from the commander of the 3rd NVA Division to his units. It read as follows: "After suffering repeated failures, soldiers and cadre of the 18th Regiment are demoralized and possess the intention of rallying to the enemy side. Order the various security sections to survey all cadre, especially the cadre from squad leader to battalion commander level, to calm and improve the morale of the aforementioned disaffected men." MACV comments that 18th Regiment personnel are believed to be very susceptible to psychological warfare, based on an earlier report of one entire squad wanting to surrender.

29 January 1967

## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. On 28 January, the Constituent Assembly completed its work on the constitution's second chapter, which deals with the rights and duties of citizens. Most of the provisions in this section are general in nature, are subject to emergency restriction, and will be defined more specifically in future legislation.

2. One of the more significant issues dealt with in the second chapter is the role of the military in politics. After a long and somewhat bitter debate, on 27 January the assembly voted in favor of a provision which states that military personnel elected to office or serving in the central government must be demobilized or take military leave of absence without salary. The assembly also banned military participation in political party activity. The government's military leaders have had a chance to examine these provisions, which were contained in the draft prepared by the assembly's subcommittee, and apparently registered no strenuous objections to them.

3. The assembly will now begin to debate the constitution's third chapter, which concerns the legislative branch of the government. The draft version now being considered by the assembly is weighted in favor of a powerful legislature, and military leaders have made it clear to assembly leaders that they want a more practical division of power between the executive and the legislative branches. Specific issues in this regard are the power of the legislature to dismiss the prime minister and the cabinet, and the exercise of the constitution's emergency powers by the legislature rather than by the executive. Several assembly leaders have indicated that they will exert their influence to cut down the constitutional prerogatives of the legislature.

4. Meanwhile, relations between the assembly and the government leaders have hit at least a temporary snag. Assembly officials have interpreted criticism of the assembly's work at a recent Saigon labor meeting and in various press articles as undue public pressure on the assembly, and feel that it has been generated by members of the Directorate and police director Loan.

29 January 1967

II-1

They are especially resentful of such criticism in view of their earlier agreement with the Directorate to work out differences over the constitution in private. In light of continuing progress on the constitution, however, US Embassy officials believe that this resentment will not reach serious proportions, and that assembly-GVN relations will be subject to ups and downs as the constitution is formulated.

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II-2

29 January 1967

Montagnard Unrest Reported

8. There have been recent indications of unrest among the montagnards in the central highlands, especially in northern Kontum Province where they have been normally quiet. [REDACTED]

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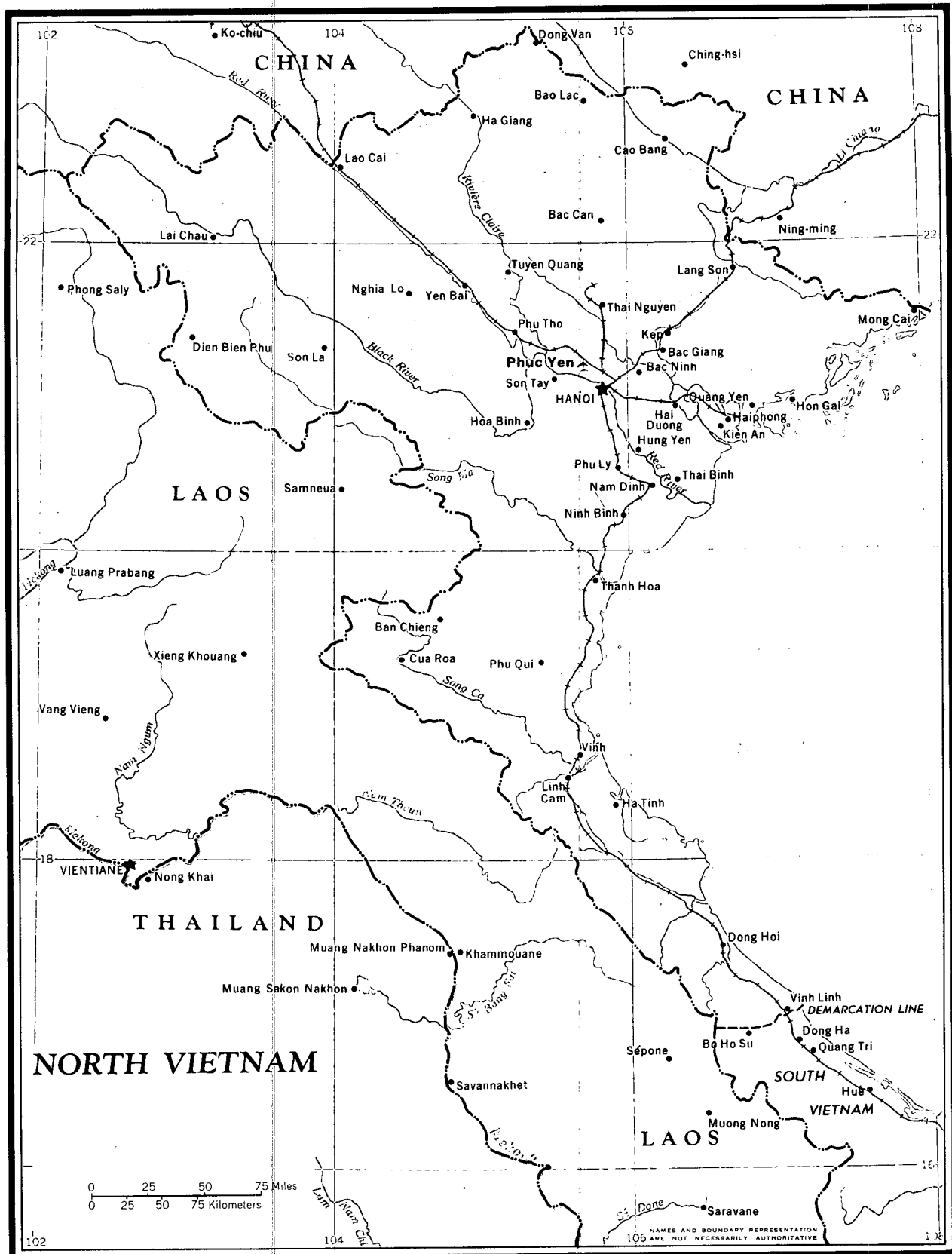
[REDACTED] this unrest stems from dissatisfaction with government policies, especially the government's inability or unwillingness to protect the montagnards against harassment by the Viet Cong. Signs of montagnard dissatisfaction have in turn prompted reports [REDACTED] that the dissident tribal autonomy organization FULRO may join North Vietnamese Army elements in staging a montagnard uprising some time before the beginning of Tet on 8 February.

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29 January 1967

II-3



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III. NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

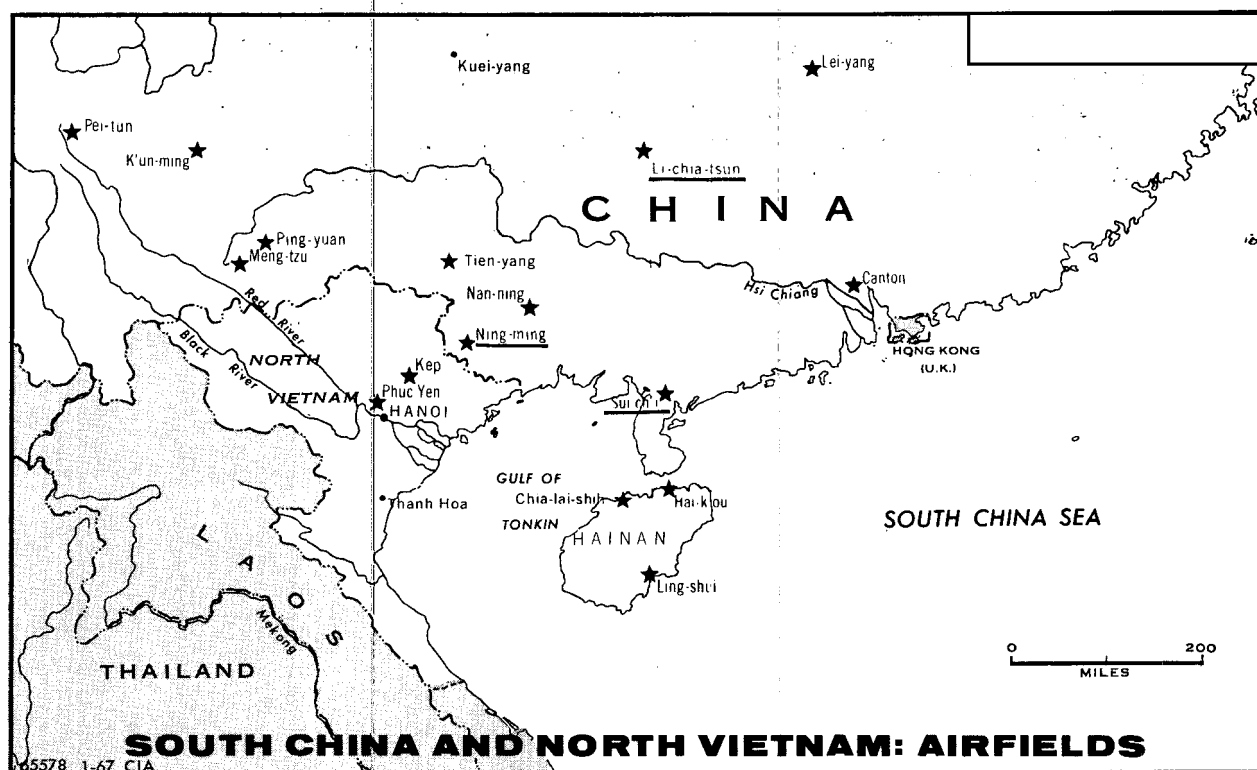
1. Photography [ ] discloses seven MIG-21 Fishbed aircraft shipping crates and five possible Fishbed crates at Phuc Yen Airfield. An additional five aircraft accessory shipping crates were observed at the field. A total of 18 assembled MIG-21s were also noted on this mission.

25X1

2. It is not possible to determine whether the 12 crates contain additional MIG-21s which have not yet been assembled. It should be noted, however, that the Soviets have on several occasions replenished the North Vietnamese MIG-21 force to between 15 and 20 aircraft after the DRV had sustained MIG-21 losses in air-to-air combat.

29 January 1967

III-1



25X1

Approved For Release 2007/04/02 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001600010029-7

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# V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. In public and private statements reported over the weekend, North Vietnamese officials, employing the most forthright language to date, stressed that if the US carried out an "unconditional cessation of the bombings of North Vietnam" there could be talks between the DRV and the US. None of the statements, however, promised that any specific action would be undertaken by the Hanoi regime in return for a bombing halt or that talks would actually be agreed to once the bombings stopped. Rather, the statements appeared to mark the latest effort in an intensifying campaign being carried on by both Hanoi and the bloc to get the US to stop the bombing without any specific agreement for a response in either a military or political sense from the Vietnamese Communists.

2. North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh in an undated but apparently recent interview with Australian Communist journalist Wilfred Burchett broadcast by Hanoi on 28 January provided the latest official DRV commentary on the bombing issue. According to the broadcast, Trinh, when questioned by Burchett on the possibility of contact between Hanoi and the US, responded that "if the US really wants talks, it must first halt unconditionally the bombing raids and all other acts of war against the DRV." Only after such an action, the foreign minister stated, "could there be talks between the DRV and the US." Trinh also included in his statement routine remarks concerning the four points, the Liberation Front, and the determination of the Vietnamese people to fight on. A lengthy commentary on the war carried in the party daily Nhan Dan on 29 January praised Trinh's remarks on the bombings and quoted and underlined them in the text.

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Hanoi's reaction to a cessation of the bombings made

29 January 1967

V-1

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K1 - during a 5 January press conference (reported in 5 January issue of The Situation in Vietnam) had added nothing to past statements by other DRV officials. [ ] denied this, claiming that if the US stopped bombing unconditionally, "it would be worth something and we would study how much it would be worth." [ ] went on to say that his 5 January remarks together with those made by Premier Pham Van Dong in his interview with Harrison Salisbury indicated that the DRV would view a cessation "as a sign of good will on the part of the Americans and will consider that it has created a new situation to which we will react." [ ]

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Other Remarks by DRV Representatives in Paris Reported

4. In his interview [ ] provided some unusually candid remarks about the Liberation Front. Asked why the Front had failed to create a government for South Vietnam, he responded by listing the governmental functions the Front allegedly carries out and by stating that "when the day comes that the forming of a government will further the Front's aim of carrying out a program of coalition with the North and ruling over the South, the Front will do so." [ ] did not clarify what he meant by a "coalition" with the North but went on to express his personal opinion that the Front by forming a government now would eliminate certain segments of the population and certain political and religious organizations and that this would prejudice the NFLSV aim of forming a broad coalition government in South Vietnam.

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X1 5. On the present political unrest in China, [ ] that it was not Hanoi's business to evaluate it, and that a Vietnamese cultural revolution would not be patterned after the Chinese.

6. A more detailed statement on the current situation in China was provided [ ]

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29 January 1967

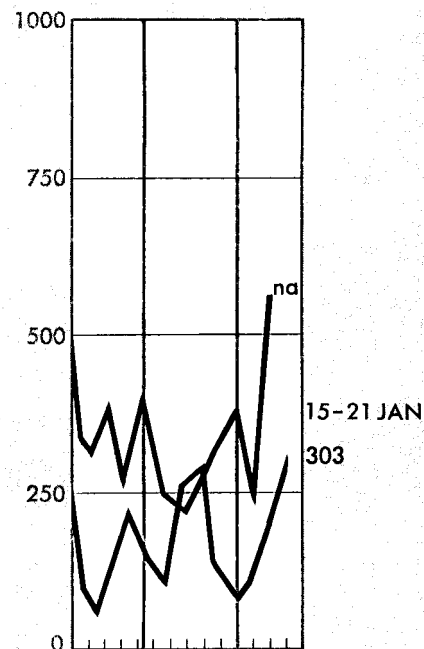
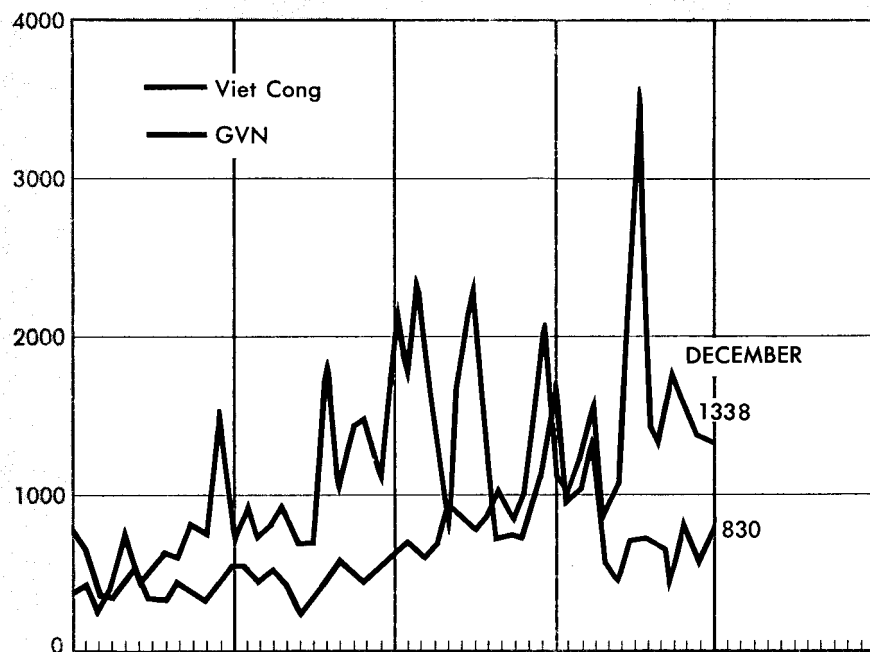
V-2

by the DRV press representative in Paris, Tran Ngoc Kha. Kha stated that the Vietnamese "who have known China well do not understand the present situation in the least." He said that the situation in China constituted a great handicap for the solution of the Vietnamese question, particularly in matters concerning military aid because transportation of such aid from the Soviet Union overland across China was considerably faster than by sea. Kha's remarks represent the first candid statement on the situation in China by a North Vietnamese official. While he cannot be regarded as an official regime spokesman, his views may well represent the concern felt in Hanoi over the unrest in China.

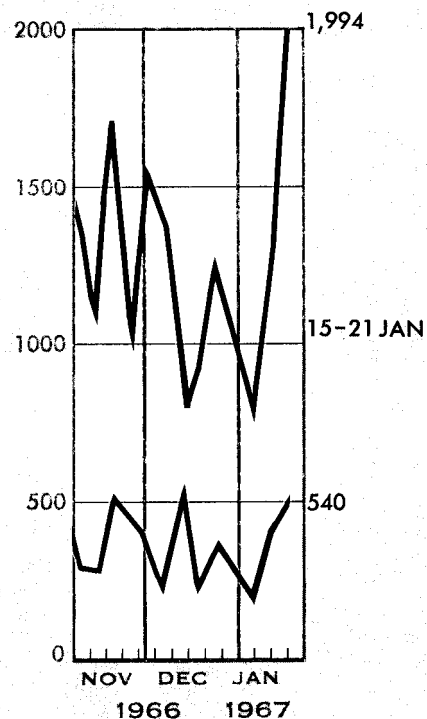
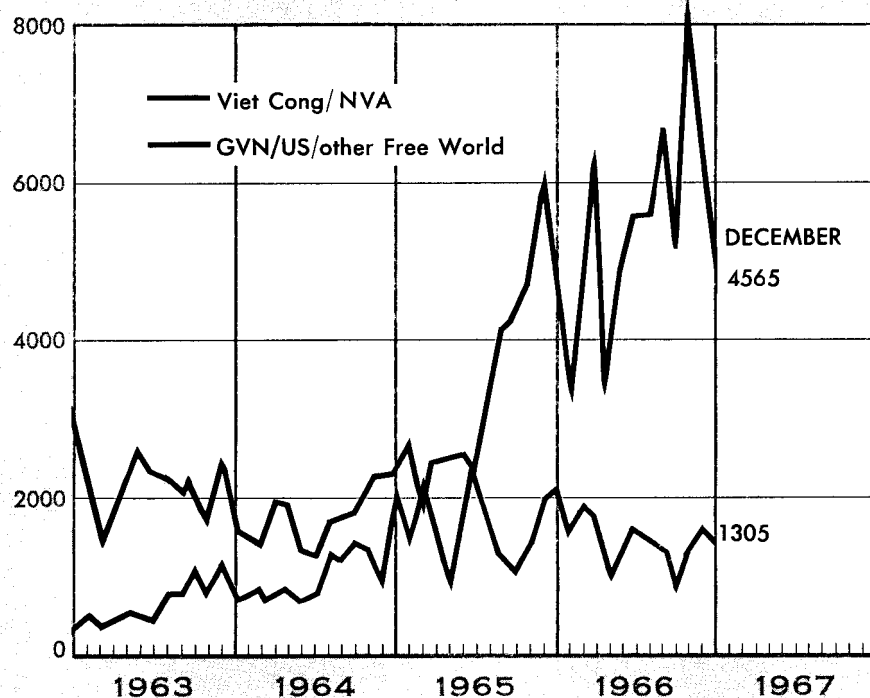
29 January 1967

V-3

## Weapons Losses



## Personnel Losses (Excluding Wounded)



US Casualties to Date: Killed 6,975 Wounded 39,852 Captured 99 Missing 380

